

Lambda Letters Project

32582

Vol. 4, No. 9 September, 1996 6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, California 95608 LambdaLP@aol.com (916) 965-6851

Military Witch Hunt Continues

Lavender Library, Archives
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Air Force Major Debra Meeks was due to retire this year in March after 22 years of faithful service. After the Air Force approved her retirement, they revoked their approval and charged her with sodomy with another woman and conduct unbecoming an officer.

The charges against Meeks asserted that she committed sodomy over a two year period with Pamela Dillard, a civilian who says she was Meeks's lover. She also says Meeks threatened her with a gun in September, 1994. That is the basis of the charge of conduct unbecoming an officer.

Meeks's attorneys state that the Air Force at first simply charged her with conduct unbecoming an officer, but later dropped that charge saying the evidence was inconclusive. Her attorneys further state that Dillard made the charge of sodomy only after the original charge was dropped, and only after further prompting by the military's Office of Special Investigations. Military authorities were unwilling to confirm or deny this description of the circumstances. The Air Force reinstituted the charges of conduct unbecoming an officer and tried her on that charge, along with the sodomy charge. Meeks faced loss of her pension, loss of

Continued on page 9

Prominent Transgendered Person Dies

The following is an excerpt of an obituary published in the *Los Angeles Times* on July 15th:

Connie Norman, a nationally known transsexual AIDS activist who pioneered commercial radio talk shows focusing on homosexual issues, has died. She was 47. Norman, who underwent a sex-change operation in 1976 and became HIV-positive in 1987, died in Los Angeles at the Chris Brownlie House due to complications of AIDS.

Connie Norman worked tirelessly with the AIDS Healthcare Foundation to fight for AIDS services. Her efforts on behalf of gay and lesbian youth, the transgendered community, and people living with HIV and AIDS were extraordinary.

She began the Connie Norman Show, an innovative evening talk program in 1991. Sometimes called "the AIDS Diva," Norman championed reform of federal AIDS funding formulas, routine offering of HIV tests by medical providers, testing newborns for HIV, and better treatment of those who have HIV or AIDS.

In addition to her radio show, Norman cohosted a weekly cable television show and wrote a column called "Tribal Writings" and another called "Notes on Life" for two newspapers of our community.

Norman's advocacy won her awards from the Los Angeles chapter of ACT-UP, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, and proclamations from the California Senate and Assembly, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and the Los Angeles City Council.

She will be missed!

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters Collected

July, 1996	4,297 letters
In all of 1996	37,146 letters

Dollars Spent

July, 1996	\$2,430
In all of 1996	\$13,222

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Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly except in December by the
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6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, CA 95608.
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Lambda Letters Project

Statement of Purpose

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

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The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

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Support for Women's HIV Research Essential

In March, Congresswoman Constance A. Morella introduced H.R. 3176, The Women and AIDS Research Initiative Amendments of 1996. This legislation would continue funding to women's HIV/AIDS research that she implemented with her initial legislation in 1990.

Continued research for women's HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment is very important. AIDS is the third leading cause of death among women aged 25–44, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Women of color have been most severely affected: while African-American women and Latinas account for only 21 percent of women in the United States, they make up 54 and 20 percent, respectively, of cumulative AIDS cases among women. Despite the new statistics on HIV, most women still do not consider themselves at risk.

Following Congresswoman Morella's successful research funding legislation in 1990, the National Institute on Allergy and Infectious Diseases initiated the Women's Natural History Study, the Women's Interagency HIV Study, and has worked to increase the number of women in its clinical trials. Both NIAID and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development have increased the resources devoted to topical microbicide research. The development of a topical microbicide—a compound capable of preventing the transmission of HIV and a range of sexually transmitted diseases—is critically needed and would revolutionize HIV and sexually transmitted diseases prevention programs around the world. Whereas current HIV-prevention methods rely on the cooperation of sexual partners to practice safe sex, women

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In Sacramento County

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BEA BETZNER, M.A., M.F.C.C.
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Protecting Educational, Abortion Programs

Congress reconvenes after their summer recess on September 4th. In the Senate, one of the hot pieces of legislation awaiting debate is the budget bill H.R. 3755, also known as the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act. H.R. 3755 passed the House on July 12th by a vote of 216–209 and is currently sitting in the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

This month's letter is directed to Senators Feinstein and Boxer, urging them to protect two important programs from further funding cuts. One is for educational funding and the other is for abortion funding.

H.R. 3755 currently proposes to cut educational funding by \$400 million, including the student loan and grant programs, and entirely wipes out President Clinton's Goals 2000 program. The American Association of University Women (AAUW) has been following this issue closely and is very concerned about how opportunities for women will be affected by these cuts. Especially during this political climate, where entitlements and affirmative action programs are being dismantled, opportunity and support for women is under constant threat. So this month we are joining the AAUW's call to action by writing our senators.

On a more positive note, the House did manage to leave in funding for abortions for low-income women in the event of rape or a life-threatening condition. However, the funding could be cut in the Senate, so we are also asking our senators to protect that program as well.

Please sign this month's letter or compose one of your own, urging Senators Feinstein and Boxer to preserve these two programs which greatly impact women. If you have any further questions about H.R. 3755, feel free to call the policy department at the AAUW at (202) 785-7785.

*Lambda Letters Project
wishes to thank Michael Boyd at
CompuStations in Sacramento for generously
offering computer time for the production of this
issue of the newsletter.*

Battle Over Gay Marriage Continues

The radical right continues its election-year gay bashing at both the federal and state levels through legislation that attempts to prohibit same-sex marriage. At the federal level, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) has been passed by the House and is currently being considered by the Senate. At the state level, two bills are attempting to prohibit state recognition of same-sex marriage contracts signed in other states. These bills are A.B. 1982 (Knight) and S.B. 2075 (Haynes).

Here's a rundown of these three bad pieces of legislation:

Defense of Marriage Act—Congress had hoped to have DOMA on the President's desk by Labor Day. However, the Senate has put off taking action on the bill until it returns from its summer recess. At the deadline for this newsletter, the Senate is scheduled to vote on DOMA on September 5th. Several Senators are planning to amend DOMA to include provisions of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) which would add sexual orientation to federal antidiscrimination laws. Last month, Lambda Letters' l/g/b/t letter was addressed to President Clinton, urging him to veto DOMA should it come to him or at least insist that the provisions of ENDA be contained in the bill before he signs it.

A.B. 1982—At the state level, A.B. 1982 (Knight) would provide that any marriage contract entered into by two members of the same gender in another state would not be recognized in California. This bill was passed by the Assembly by the mini-

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Silence is the virtue of fools.

— Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

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Outword

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Identifying Hate Crimes


Please ask your county district attorney to prosecute hate crimes with vigor and assure that all such crimes are reported to the State Attorney General. You will find the name and address of your district attorney on the enclosed sample letter.

Last year was the first full year for which state law required local law enforcement agencies to report hate crime statistics to the Attorney General's office. Local agencies are required to report hate crimes that were motivated by the victim's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or mental disability. Table 1 (see page 7) contains a summary of what was reported for 1995. Please consult that table to see the number of hate crimes reported by your county, the number of those cases that were prosecuted, and the number of them in which convictions were obtained.

Table 2 (also on page 7) shows the numbers and types of hate crimes statewide. County-by-county numbers of hate crimes by type are not currently available. The State Attorney General's office reports that 69.3 percent of hate crimes statewide were motivated by the victim's race or ethnicity, 12.5 percent by

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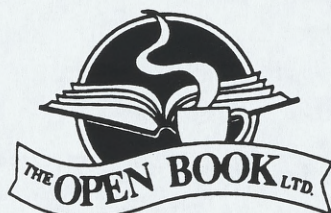
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Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/ Transgender Analyst Needed

We need a volunteer to help us prepare our monthly articles and sample letters on lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender issues. This volunteer should have good writing skills. He or she will spend about ten hours a month researching possible subjects and then composing sample letters and articles for our newsletter. The volunteer will also need to attend a monthly, two- to three-hour staff meeting in which each month's subjects are chosen and other important business of the Project is accomplished. Staff meetings are held on weekends and rotate between locations in the Sacramento and Oakland areas.

The Project can provide leads on how to find suitable subjects and advice on writing if needed. This is a great opportunity for you to influence the subjects we cover. Please consider volunteering for this important position, or help us find the person to do it. A travel allowance can be provided to cover the cost of traveling to and from staff meetings.

If you're interested, please send us a note with your letters or call Boyce Hinman at (916) 965-6851. You may also e-mail us at LambdaLP@aol.com.



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709 28th Street, Sacramento
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Dr. Cameron Yee, Optometrist

6407 Riverside Blvd., Sacramento
(916) 395-0673

Entertainment Books for the rest of the state should be available in early October. Volunteers and businesses from other parts of the state are needed to help sell those Entertainment Books. If you are willing to help us do that, please tell us by enclosing a note when you return your letters, or call us at (916) 965-6851.

We have a special offer for those who help us sell books. Anyone who sells 15 Entertainment Books for Lambda Letters will get another book *absolutely free*! Sell 30 books and get two books free. One of our members once got six free Entertainment Books for selling so many! You can use these free books as gifts to family and friends. Call us or write to us, letting us know you will support Lambda Letters by selling Entertainment Books.

Help us grow and serve you better by selling Entertainment Books to your friends and neighbors. Please let us know that you are willing to be a sales representative for Lambda Letters in your neighborhood.

Women's AIDS Research

Continued from page 3

could use a topical microbicide with or without their sexual partner's cooperation or knowledge.

H.R. 3176 includes additional funding to continue the Women's Interagency HIV Study—the ongoing study of HIV progression in women—and conduct other research to determine the impact of potential risk factors for HIV transmission to women, such as infection with other sexually transmitted diseases, the use of various contraceptive methods, and the use of vaginal products.

The bill also provides funding for referrals, including treatment for HIV and substance abuse, mental health services, pregnancy and childbirth, pediatric care, housing services, public assistance, job training, child care, respite care, and domestic violence.

As you can imagine, continued research for women's prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS is desperately needed. Please sign this month's letter on this issue and return it promptly.



Couples, Families, Individuals

Ellie Zacks, Ph.D.

*Clinical Psychologist
PSY10426*

(916) 725-4713

By Appointment

6359 Auburn Blvd., Suite E, Citrus Heights, CA 95621

Gay Marriage Battle

Continued from page 4

mum required vote, and has passed out of both the Senate Judiciary Committee and Appropriations Committee. However, significant amendments were made to the bill in the Senate Judiciary Committee, adding provisions for health benefits to domestic partners of state employees and a statewide domestic partnership registration program. The bill now goes to the Senate floor and, if passed there, back to the Assembly to ratify the amendments added in the Senate. It is anticipated that the bill will not be ratified by the Assembly.

S.B. 2075—Because of the gay-supportive amendments to A.B. 1982 passed in the Senate, the radical right extremists in the Assembly have gutted S.B. 2075 (Haynes), which originally dealt with “collections and forfeitures” and added language similar in effect to the original version of A.B. 1982. At the writing of this newsletter, S.B. 2075 is before the Assembly floor. If passed by the Assembly, the bill must go back to the Senate for approval of the amendments made in the Assembly.

Should either A.B. 1982 or S.B. 2075 make it to the Governor's desk, our letter this month to the Governor asks him to veto both bills. Remember that a personal, handwritten letter is most effective. But if you do not have the time to prepare a personal letter, simply sign the enclosed sample letter and return it to Lambda Letters. While personal letters are more effective, the volume of signed letters from our membership will leave a significant impression upon the Governor.

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WEDDING

Identifying Hate Crimes

Continued from page 4

the victim's religion, 18.1 percent by the victim's sexual orientation, and 0.2 percent by the victim's disability.

A spokesperson for the State Attorney General notes that since this was the first year in which reports were required, the number of hate crimes and the number of prosecutions and convictions were probably under-reported, because local agencies were not yet used to the process. She added that many of the counties reporting no hate crimes probably did have such crimes in 1995. Also, the number of convictions may be low because the judicial process is slow. Crimes that occurred in 1995 might not result in convictions until 1996. In that case, the convictions would not show up until this year's report.

The reporting of hate crimes, and reporting of the prosecution and conviction of those who commit them, is important because it provides information as to the scope and the basis of hate crimes. That helps ensure that the most effective possible programs are designed to combat those crimes. For example, if statistics show that there is a very high incidence of hate crimes against lesbians, gays, and bisexuals, then programs must be established to eradicate the prejudice that underlies these crimes.

The statistics also help determine whether or not prosecutors are prosecuting these crimes with the necessary vigor. For example, according to Table 1, no county prosecuted more than 52 percent of the hate crimes that occurred in their county. Fifteen counties reporting hate crimes in their jurisdiction reported that they prosecuted none of those cases. Curiously, Modoc County reported that no hate crimes were committed in their county, yet they prosecuted two such cases. Possibly these were prosecutions resulting from crimes that occurred before 1995.

Hate crimes are a real cancer to our society. They tear at the fabric of society by breeding hatred and mistrust among the various communities within this nation. California is particularly vulnerable because of the extremely diverse makeup of its population. Therefore, it is particularly important that we collect the statistics necessary to measure the scope and nature of the problem and that we then give a high priority to prosecuting the purveyors of hate in our land.

Please write to your county district attorney and urge that he or she give high priority to the gathering of statistics on hate crimes and prosecute those who commit them to the full extent of the law.

Table 2. Incidence and Types of Hate Crimes Statewide

Bias Motivation	No. Events
Race/Ethnicity:	1,215
White	193
Black	567
Hispanic	158
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	142
Multi-Race	81
Other Race/Ethnic Group	73
Religion:	219
Jewish	174
Catholic	4
Protestant	8
Islamic	8
Other Religion	18
Multi-Religious Group	7
Atheism/Agnosticism/etc.	0
Sexual Orientation:	317
Male Homosexual	251
Female Homosexual	50
Homosexual	14
Heterosexual	1
Bisexual	1
Physical/Mental Disability:	3
Physical Disability	0
Mental Disability	3

Table 1. Hate Crimes Reported and Prosecuted in California, 1995

County	Reported Crimes	Prosecute Crimes	Conviction
Alameda	49	9	5
Alpine	0	0	0
Amador	0	0	0
Butte	2	1	0
Calaveras	0	0	0
Colusa	1	0	0
Contra Costa	54	4	0
Del Norte	0	0	0
El Dorado	4	0	0
Fresno	22	0	0
Glenn	0	0	0
Humboldt	2	1	3
Imperial	2	0	0
Inyo	0	0	1
Kern	21	11	5
Kings	0	0	0
Lake	0	0	0
Lassen	2	0	0
Los Angeles	651	46	30
Madera	0	0	0
Marin	14	1	1
Mariposa	0	0	0
Mendocino	4	1	0
Merced	1	0	0
Modoc	0	2	2
Mono	0	0	0
Monterey	9	1	1
Napa	0	0	0
Nevada	0	0	0
Orange	89	5	3
Placer	6	1	1
Plumas	0	0	0
Riverside	40	4	4
Sacramento	88	4	3
San Benito	0	0	0
San Bernardino	36	0	0
San Diego	190	14	9
San Francisco	290	21	4
San Joaquin	7	1	1
San Luis Obispo	6	0	0
San Mateo	16	5	0
Santa Barbara	6	0	0
Santa Clara	47	7	6
Santa Cruz	8	0	0
Shasta	22	0	0
Sierra	0	0	0
Siskiyou	0	0	0
Solano	15	2	0
Sonoma	15	2	1
Stanislaus	13	0	0
Sutter	1	0	0
Tehama	1	1	1
Trinity	0	0	0
Tulare	2	0	0
Tuolumne	0	0	0
Ventura	6	1	1
Yolo	6	0	0
Yuba	6	1	1

Domestic Partner Benefits Win in Court

In early August Judge Stephen Gallagher ruled that the Oregon Employees' Benefit Board violated the Oregon state constitution by denying spousal benefits to three lesbian couples who have all "enjoyed a long-term committed relationship identical to marriage." Judge Gallagher is a Circuit Court Judge for the county of Multnomah in Oregon.

The judge went on to say that "it is beyond debate that invidious and virulent discrimination has been, and is, directed toward and suffered by lesbian and gay-men communities in this state."

The judge ordered the State of Oregon to offer health insurance to the domestic partners of lesbian and gay state employees, saying that failure to make the same benefits available to gay and heterosexual couples amounts to illegal discrimination.

The judge's decision will probably be appealed.

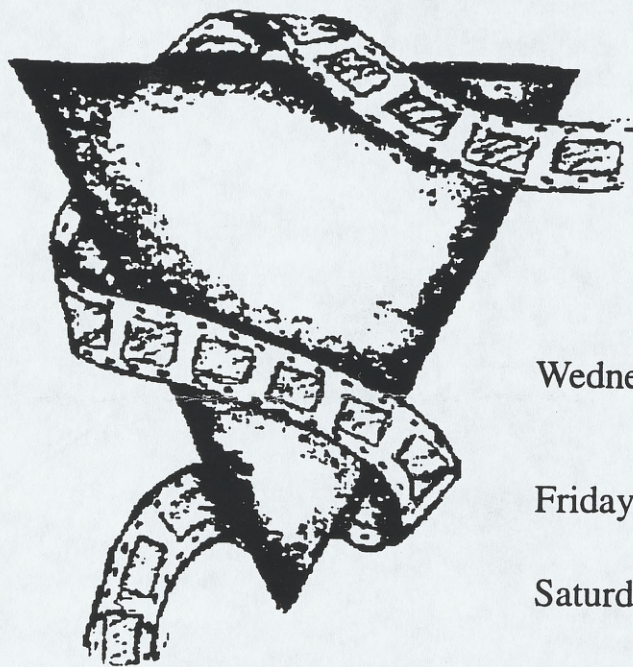
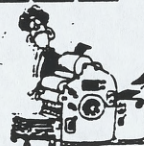
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Witch Hunt Continues

Continued from page 1

all benefits and imprisonment for up to eight years if convicted on both charges. In late August a military jury found her not guilty, but only after she was put through some very tough times.

The Air Force has also been conducting a witch hunt at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii. They have been aggressively seeking evidence to find and prosecute lesbians and gays in the military at that base. These activities clearly violate the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy established early in President Clinton's term of office.

Recently one serviceperson stationed at Hickam was discharged for being gay. Two more are threatened with expulsion and one member of the Navy may be discharged as a result of this aggressive investigation and pursuit of gays in the military.

You can do something about this. Contact the following people and urge them to stop the persecution:

The Hon. William Perry, Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000
Phone: (703) 695-5261
Fax: (703) 695-1219

The Hon. Sheila Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force
Air Force Pentagon, Room 4E871
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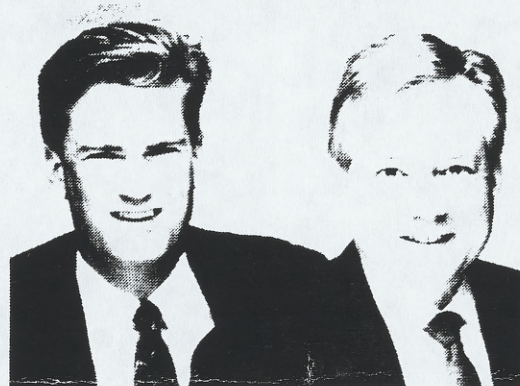
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